

---

# THE PENN FAMILY.

BY

JOHN JAY SMITH.

---







## THE PENN FAMILY.

---

THE object of the present paper—written at the request of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania<sup>1</sup>—is to bring down to the present day a history of the Penn family, rather than to commemorate its elder branches, or enter upon a history of the State.

Beginning with Sir William Penn, Knight, the father of our founder, and one of England's great admirals, we briefly trace his ancestry to William Penn, who died in the year 1591. His son, Giles Penn, the father of the admiral, was born in 1621, and married, in 1643, Margaret Jasper.<sup>2</sup> The admiral, a man of great ability in his profession, received early and rapid promotion, rising, at twenty-one, to be captain in the English navy, vice-admiral of Ireland at twenty-six, admiral in the Straits at twenty-nine, vice-admiral of England at thirty-one, general of the Dutch war at thirty-two, member of Parliament at thirty-four, governor of Kingsale at thirty-nine, and captain-commander under the Duke of York at forty-three. He died

---

<sup>1</sup> This sketch of the Penn family was the subject of an evening's entertainment, having been read before the Historical Society by its author, Mr. John Jay Smith, on the 18th of November, 1867.

<sup>2</sup> "Sir William Penn's daughter Margaret was married to Anthony Lowther, Esq., of Mask, in the County of York, whose descendant in the second generation, Sir Thomas Lowther, of Holker, in the County of Lancaster, Bart., married the Lady Elizabeth Cavendish, daughter of William Cavendish, Duke of Devonshire. Their only son and child, William, dying unmarried, in 1756, the title became extinct, and his estates passed, by his will, to the noble house of Cavendish."—*Life of Sir William Penn*, by GRANVILLE PENN.

in his fiftieth year. His epitaph, in Redcliff church, Bristol, England, after enumerating his services, says:

“ He withdrew,

Prepared and made his end; and with a gentle and  
Even Gale, in much peace, arrived and anchored in his  
Last and Best Port, at Wanstead, in ye County of Essex,

Ye 16th of September, 1670, being then but 49 years and 4 months old:  
To whose name and merit his surviving Lady hath erected this remembrance.”

It sounds oddly in the ear of a Pennsylvanian, upon reaching England, to learn that the name and fame of Admiral Penn are better known and more appreciated than the actions of the founder of our State. Time will decide between the reputations of the father and son. The one may have fought bravely and destroyed his thousands of human lives—the other founded a great commonwealth, and introduced laws whose significant value has impressed itself on a whole great nation's history; and all time will but strengthen his claims on the gratitude of the ages.

In his “*GREAT LAW*,” passed in 1682, at Chester, will be found the grand declaration as to liberty of conscience: “Nor shall he or she, at any time, be compelled to frequent or maintain any religious worship, place, or ministry whatever, contrary to his or her mind, but shall freely and fully enjoy his or her Christian liberty in that respect, without any interruption or reflection.” The result of this law—one so strongly in contrast with the intolerant legislation of the Old World, from which such numbers had fled and so many are fleeing—can scarcely be appreciated. Upon other states this enlarged view of the rights of conscience had a powerful influence, and they were not tardy in incorporating into their constitutions the grand, imperishable doctrine. The basis of the proprietary government was not Christianity restricted to particular tenets—not a church establishment, with tithes and spiritual courts; but Christianity, with liberty of conscience to all men. The story of the foundation of Pennsylvania, the rescue of the proprietary interests from many and serious embarrassments, and the correspondence of the founder with his agent here, are full of human interest; and the last, detailing, as it does, the sor-

rows and anxieties of the “great and good Penn,” cannot be even hastily perused without profound emotion.

The long agony was at last over. William Penn died on 30th July, 1718. The province passed to his sons—a principality now, with resources so vast and expanding that the mind fails to grasp its future. It would have been fair to anticipate that the family which had obtained and planted so great a seed would continue for centuries to reap the ripened fruit. Such, however, was not the case. The sons met with opposition, as did their father, and with the usual difficulties attendant on the founding of a province: some agents embezzled the money produced by sales of land, while the daily wants of each proprietary absorbed much of the proceeds obtained by parting in haste with the most valuable properties. At the same time it is right to record that their revenues from the State were not inconsiderable, and were mainly expended in the adornment of their dwellings of Stoke and of Pennsylvania Castle. These revenues have now almost entirely ceased. William Penn had, by his first wife, Gulielma Maria Springett, a son, William, upon whom he settled the estates in England and Ireland inherited from Admiral Penn, and those brought by his first wife, together producing an income of about fifteen hundred pounds per annum. These estates were then considered more valuable than the American possessions, which were devised to John, Thomas, and Richard Penn, the sons by William Penn’s second wife, Hannah Callowhill. In this connection it may be proper to advert, for a moment, to the residences of William Penn in England and Ireland. His early residence in Ireland, Shangarry Castle, is now an ivy-covered ruin; but its tall tower, rising above the bright-green foliage, gives a commanding and picturesque air to the remains. The Irish estates were in chancery for a long period, and were not released till 1800, when they were divided between the heirs at law of Peter Gaskill and Alexander Durden. The latter married the widow of William Penn’s oldest son, William, in 1767, and, dying soon after, she left him, Durden, her sole heir.

Worminghurst House was situated on an eminence overlook-

ing the beautiful South Downs of Sussex, and within a few miles of the sea. It was razed to the ground long since, and the Worminghurst estate absorbed in the domains of the Duke of Norfolk: only the stables remain to mark the spot where stood that charming home, so long brightened by the presiding presence of Penn's first wife, Gulielma Maria.

Ruscombe, where William Penn long lived during the latter years of his life, and where he died, is about six miles from Reading, in Berkshire. The house, which was a fine one, was pulled down a few years since, to make way for a railroad. But to return to our narrative:

John Penn visited Pennsylvania in 1734, and died, without issue, in 1746, leaving his share of the province to his brother Thomas, who came to Philadelphia in 1732, and returned to England in 1740. Thomas married Lady Julianna Fermor, and died in 1775. A curious paper, drawn up by Thomas Penn and completed by Dr. Franklin, in 1759, gives a minute calculation of the supposed worth of the proprietary estate in Pennsylvania, and makes the aggregate value about ten millions sterling. Twenty years later, on the 27th November, 1779, the Legislature of Pennsylvania passed an act (1 Smith, 479) for vesting the estate of the late proprietaries in the commonwealth. As this estate originally consisted of the entire soil of the province, Sabine is correct in stating that it "was by far the largest that was forfeited in America, and perhaps that was ever sequestered during any civil war in either hemisphere." By this act the proprietaries' private estates, including the tenths or manors, were reserved to them, and the sum of one hundred and thirty thousand pounds sterling was required to be paid to the devisees and legatees of Thomas and Richard Penn on the termination of the war, "in remembrance of the enterprising spirit of the founder," and "of the expectations and dependence of his descendants." The amount of money received by the State of Pennsylvania, between 1781 and 1789, from the escheated lands of the heirs of William Penn, appears, by the comptroller-general's account, as recorded in Janney's "Life of Penn," to have been £82,400 4 os. 7d. In addition to the compensation voted by this State, Parliament, in 1790,

granted an annuity of four thousand pounds per annum to the eldest male descendant of William Penn by his second wife, to indemnify the family for the loss of territorial rights in Pennsylvania consequent on the Revolution. This annuity is still regularly paid, the present recipient being, as I suppose, William Stewart, Esq., of Aldenham Abbey, Herts.

After the Revolution, with the exception of John Penn, son of Richard and grandson of William Penn, who was governor of Pennsylvania from 1763 to 1771, and from 1775 to the beginning of hostilities, and who died in Bucks County in 1795, Pennsylvanians saw and heard but little of the Founder's family. It may almost be said they were to us somewhat of a myth. The American ambassador for the time being, perhaps, had an annual invitation to pass a day or two at Stoke Park, but for a long time before my own first visit in 1845, scarcely half a dozen Pennsylvanians, if I am correctly informed, had been taken cordially by the hand by any member of the family. It does not appear that an acerbity had grown up in their minds, though they had to sustain their rights through many vexatious controversies about property; but other interests and connections absorbed their attention and thoughts.

Thomas Penn's eldest son, the late and last John Penn, (grandson of the Founder,) was a virtuoso, a builder and an ornamenter of fine residences—a man of fashion, and no longer retaining, any more than the other relatives, the religious convictions of his great ancestor. He published two large octavo volumes of poems, elegantly illustrated; built successively the great house in Kensington Gardens, London, and the noble mansion of Stoke, whose magnificent park and grounds he laid out and planted. He was governor of the island of Portland, from which he derived the celebrated stone used everywhere, and of which the new Houses of Parliament are built. Portland is on the southern coast of England, one hundred and eighty-five miles from London, with which it is now connected by rail— is opposite Cherbourg on the French coast, and twenty miles west of the Isle of Wight. John Penn there constructed a handsome dwelling in the form of a castle: this was very properly named, at the suggestion of a titled female relative, Pennsylvania Castle.

It was this marine residence which John's nephew, Granville John, after his sale of Stoke Park to Mr. Labouchere, member of a late Cabinet, (now Lord Taunton,) called his home.

Below the castle, on the rocks jutting into the sea, are the remains of Bow-and-Arrow Castle, one of the most ancient in England, built, says tradition, by King Arthur. Ruin as it is, it is still beautifully picturesque, and covered with very ancient ivy. The ivy had become yellow, from having exhausted the too little nourishment the rocks afforded, when an American, in 1865, with the assistance of Mr. Penn and the gardeners, supplied its roots with new earth to resuscitate its amber age. The ruin is in full view of the dining-room, drawing-room, and library windows of the newer castle, which in itself, though castellated, is a modern residence, calculated for a large family, and abounding in every comfort. On a small mounted brass cannon on the front lawn, with its muzzle pointed seaward, is inscribed that it was presented by an intimate friend, a nobleman, to John Penn, "member of Parliament." This is the only record I can recall of John Penn's membership of the British House of Commons. The island of Portland is a singularly barren one as regards trees or cultivation; but by careful shelter and artistic planting, John Penn succeeded in surrounding the castle with belts of beautiful trees, the admiration of numerous visitors, who resort to the house and grounds during the bathing season at Weymouth. A ticket to see the "Governor's Castle" has to be obtained in the town, distant about eight miles. The magnificent Government breakwater, now in the course of construction by convicts, has added, it is supposed, nothing to the value of the castle as a property; but since 1865 the island has been entered by a railroad, intended to convey the Portland stone to London, etc. The grounds belonging to the castle are situated on this valuable stone deposit, on the very apex of which occur remarkable remains of sea-fish, often taken out of the cleavage in a singular state of perfection, and laid aside as specimens for museums: when a good one is found, the workmen call attention to it, and receive as a right the expected fee.

Some of the customs of this island, but now fading away under the influence of a connection by bridges with the main-

land, are as curious and singular as anything related of the most uneducated populations.

At Portland, John Penn, as governor of the island, was regularly and officially in attendance on the court of George the Third when that monarch visited his favorite watering-place, Weymouth, adjoining the island. A likeness of John, in full court-dress, hangs among the family portraits in the picture-gallery at the castle; and there, opposite each other, are very good portraits (copies) of William Penn and James Logan. In another picture, John is seen in full military array, sword in hand, at the head of the Portland troop of horse, which he had organized for the defence of the English coast against the expected invasion of Napoleon.

John Penn also erected the modest mansion of Solitude, still standing on the west bank of the Schuylkill, opposite Fairmount, and now within the limits of our new Park. He had a morbid dislike of intrusion during his hours of study. At Solitude there is still extant the underground passage between the detached kitchen and the dining-room. At the castle a still more elaborate arrangement was made for seclusion. All along the sea front of the mansion there is a private gallery, or hall, leading from the very beautiful sunny library to the drawing and dining rooms in the great round tower. A good story is told somewhere, that a servant at Solitude was determined to know how his master employed his time in those hours when he was not visible: he stationed himself at a keyhole one day, and saw his employer lying on a sofa, delightedly reading a volume of his own poems! His translations exhibit considerable literary acumen, but somehow were never popular. In his college days, says the *Gentleman's Magazine* for December, 1834, John Penn, in virtue of his maternal ancestry, was received as a nobleman at Cambridge, and the degree of M. A. was conferred on him in 1779. He died in 1834.

Granville Penn, John's younger brother, (who died at Stoke in 1844,) was a scholar, a writer of esteemed books; and in fact was called the most learned layman in England. He passed his entire life in literary pursuits and in the education of

his children.<sup>1</sup> He inherited Stoke and the Pennsylvania interests from his brother John. His life was not prolonged beyond a few years afterward, when Stoke, together with other property, and nearly all the small remaining proprietary interests here, fell by inheritance to his oldest son, Granville John.

The Penns of our day, as we have seen, engaged in pursuits foreign to their interests in America, were naturally desirous to know what moneys could be recovered from lands still their own. Many successive agents in the old times, good and bad, had been employed to nurse or to sell — alas! to part with — property before it had fully ripened for the market. In 1845, Granville John was induced to propose a visit to Pennsylvania. Wishing to know more than his father had known, he resolved to see for himself the great State with which his name was so honorably and intimately connected. The "heir," as we may safely call him, visited us first in 1851, and subsequently paid us a second visit of some length. He was of course received with the respect due to his station: the gentlemen of Pennsylvania vied with each other to do him honor; he was the recipient of a public dinner; the Mayor and Councils of Philadelphia gave

---

<sup>1</sup> The following is a list of the works of Granville Penn:  
Observations in Illustration of Virgil's celebrated Fourth Eclogue.  
1 vol., oct., London, 1810.  
A Christian's Survey of all the Primary Events and Periods of the World. 1 vol., duo., London, 1812.  
The Prophecy of Ezekiel concerning Gogue, the last Tyrant of the Church. 1 vol., duo., London, 1814.  
The Bioscope, or Dial of Life Explained. 1 vol., duo. Two editions, London, 1814.  
Institutes of Christian Perfection; or, Macarius the Egyptian, called the Great. Translated from the Greek. 1 vol., duo., London, 1816.  
An Examination of the Primary Argument of the Iliad. 1 vol., oct., London, 1821.  
A Comparative Estimate of the Mineral and Mosaical Geologies. Two editions. 2 vols., oct., London, 1825.  
Memorials of the Professional Life and Times of Sir William Penn, Knt. 2 vols., oct., London, 1833.  
The Book of the New Covenant of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. 1 vol., oct., London, 1836.  
Annotations of the Book of the New Covenant. 1 vol., oct., London, 1837.

him a public reception, and his speeches on both occasions were remarkable for classical taste and dignified delivery. These attentions he returned by a very elegant collation under tents at Solitude. He afterward visited many parts of this State, and extended his tour to Washington, Ohio, etc., expressing himself everywhere delighted with our scenery and people, and highly gratified to witness so much that was beautiful, and such great prosperity. His name was a passport to many kindnesses and civilities, which were evinced by railroad facilities and public attentions. The circumstance of the advent of the head of the house of Penn among us, after so long an estrangement, was truly admitted to be of great interest. A similar event cannot be hoped for: his only brother, Thomas, and the only survivor of the name, died without issue September 9, 1869, and was interred in the family vault at Stoke. We therefore of this generation have seen the last of the Founder's descendants of the name of Penn, unless, indeed, some other branch should wisely take the family designation, not by birth its own.

Death has indeed been rife in the circle since 1845. The family at Stoke Park then consisted of the widow of Granville Penn, her husband then very recently deceased, a very old lady; Granville John; three unmarried sisters; and the youngest brother, William, who was educated for the Bar. The mother, the three daughters, and the three sons are now all deceased; but a more happy and united family than they formed twenty-five years ago, it would be difficult to describe. Their surroundings were all of the very first class, as regards a truly noble residence; an extensive and perfectly-kept park, abounding in deer and other game; a library of great size and value; liveried servants, fine horses and coaches, with everything that could make life desirable. The picturesque park, that had seen so many successive generations come and go, as one rambled among its beautiful and ancient trees was as silent as any scene amid our own native forests. The servants had mowed the extensive lawns; the hot-house gardeners had set out the Italian portico with newly-flowered plants, covering the pots with lycopodiums and mosses, and the attendants had all disappeared before breakfast was announced: every sound was stilled, and

the place was all one's own. The deer silently wandered among the ferns half as tall as themselves; the librarian, himself a learned man and an author of merit, was at his post to hand the guests any book they required, or the morning edition of the *London Times*. Such is an imperfect glimpse of the best English life. The impression was, How painful to leave it and to die!

One felt assured, on passing into the great entrance-hall, beneath a funereal hatchment in memory of the late proprietor, that he was not entering a house of consistent Quakers, for one of the first objects was a pair of small brass cannon, taken by Admiral Penn in his Dutch wars, elegantly mounted and polished; and near by, opening on the left, was a fine billiard-room. Family prayers were not neglected: the numerous servants were regularly assembled, as is a usual custom in England: the service of the day was reverently read, and all, from the head of the house to the humblest individual, on their knees gave thanks for mercies received. The house was not wanting in memorials of Pennsylvania—a large portion of the Treaty Tree, sent by some members of the Historical Society, with a silver label on it, ornamenting the grand drawing-room of the second story, which was reached by a superb, long, and rather fatiguing marble staircase. The birds of Pennsylvania, too, were represented in elegant glass cases, together with Indian relics, and a finely preserved beaver, which animal was once the annual tribute of the Penns to the Crown.

Stoke was purchased in 1760 of the noble family of Cobham by Thomas Penn, son of the Founder. It had been the property of Sir Christopher Hatton, promoted by Queen Elizabeth for his graceful person and fine dancing; of Lord Coke, (Coke upon Littleton;) and lastly of the Cobham family. Below the garrets, and at the extremity of one wing of the original mansion, had been a state bed-chamber, which, according to tradition, was once occupied by Queen Elizabeth, and where she gave an audience. The ceiling was marked in several places with the initials E. R. and a crown.

A commanding pillar by Wyatt, with a life-size figure of Sir Edward Coke, was erected by the late John Penn not far from

the new house. The old manse was a quaint brick structure, as shown by a view from the pencil of the celebrated Mrs. Oliver: it is now mainly demolished, enough, however, being left to exhibit its character. What remains has been converted into the residence of the keeper of the park, with two apartments in the second story fitted up by the Penns, as pleasure-rooms or resting-places, and furnished with portraits, hangings, and other decorations in keeping with the age of its erection. Space has also been left for a fine racket-court under the old roof and walls.

But one of the chief interests of this old dwelling lies in the fact that it is the scene of Gray's "Long Story." The church, not far from the mansion, is Gray's church — the inspirer of his "Elegy in a Country Churchyard." This exquisite poet and scholar was buried in the churchyard in the year 1771, without any kind of memorial to indicate the spot; but it is known to be near the grave of his venerated mother: a recent rector has placed a stone under the window overlooking the scene, where the inscription by Gray is in substance as follows:

"The mother of many children,  
One only of whom had the misfortune  
To survive her."

But in 1798 a sarcophagus, elevated upon a pedestal, after an elegant design by James Wyatt, and with appropriate inscriptions, partly from Gray's odes and Elegy, was erected by John Penn upon a spot commanding the points of view connecting the interesting objects there particularized. On one side are the following eight lines of the Elegy, supposed to represent Gray himself:

"Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,  
Muttering his wayward fancies, he would rove;  
Now drooping, woful, wan, like one forlorn,  
Or crazed with care, or cross'd in hopeless love.

"One morn I miss'd him on the 'customed hill,  
Along the heath and near his fav'rite tree:  
Another came; nor yet beside the rill,  
Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood, was he."

On another side are lettered the following lines from the "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College":

“Where once my careless childhood strayed,  
A stranger yet to pain!—  
I feel the gales that from ye blow  
A momentary bliss bestow,  
As, waving fresh their gladsome wing,  
My weary soul they seem to soothe,  
And, redolent of joy and youth,  
To breathe a second spring.”

John Penn and other members of his family have shown, as the London *Times* remarks, the greatest regard for the memory of Gray; in fact, have identified their name with his.

Gray's house, on the large farm belonging to the estate, was most superbly ornamented by the celebrated architect Wyatt, who converted it into an Elizabethan mansion, with every possible accessory of ornament and beauty — fountains, etc. — at the expense of the late Mr. G. J. Penn, who designed occupying it at intervals for his own residence, though his time during the latter portion of his life was mostly passed in London, in attendance on his invalid brother. Some years, however, were greatly enjoyed by him in domestic tranquillity with his sisters in a desirable house in Belgravia.

Gray's house was finally sold to a man of wealth. In 1850, the Government was in treaty for Stoke as a residence for the Prince of Wales, the negotiation failing only because it was determined the Prince should live nearer to or in London. As an evidence of the value of these places, Stoke was sold for three hundred and fifty thousand dollars; and, if I am correctly informed, Gray's house and the large farm attached produced an equal sum.

The library of Stoke House is situated behind the grand colonnade, and is one hundred and eighty feet in length: it is a noble room, and was nobly filled with the best books and best editions; among which the visitor could not fail to remark the original manuscript of Gray's Elegy, which consisted of only a few sheets, with many alterations on them, and which was afterward sold for twelve hundred dollars. This treasure was encased in a delicate, velvet-covered box, clasped and ornamented with gold. Every published edition of Gray was here enshrined: the first has the modest title-page, “Poems by Mr. Gray.”

The whole scene is surpassingly lovely, and, being within an easy walk of Windsor, it is the shrine of the pilgrimage of travellers who appreciate true genius and finished poetical expression. The mansion was also a "show house": the picture by West of the Treaty Tree—now removed to Philadelphia—the family portraits by Sir Joshua Reynolds, and other treasures of art, with John Penn's tasteful architecture, landscape gardening, and extensive planting, attracted and still attract numerous visitors. In short, it is a fitting residence for a wealthy nobleman. Its buildings and artistic decorations absorbed a large part of the income from manors reserved in this province.

A pleasant neighborly feeling existed between the royal family and the Penns: the fox-hounds of Windsor frequently were allowed to course through Stoke Park; John Penn sent, on one occasion, some of Pennsylvania's favorite canvas-back ducks for the royal table. In 1864, Herne's Oak, in the great Windsor Park, blew down. The Queen ordered the wood to be carefully preserved. Mr. Penn requested a small portion, which was cheerfully granted. A copy of Campbell's edition of Shakespeare, complete in one volume, and now in the writer's possession, is one of two copies bound with the relic, and the only one in America.

The late Granville John Penn, born November, 1803—whose gift to the Historical Society of the original belt of wampum will be remembered, and whose accomplishments, amiable disposition, and refined manners endeared him to all who knew him—was educated for the Chancery Bar, and read with a learned tutor who has since risen to great eminence. His scholarship he acquired at Christ Church, Oxford, where he took his degrees. Dr. Langley, the present Archbishop of Canterbury, was his and his surviving brother's tutor there. Under the auspices of this distinguished prelate he had intended to reprint the "New Covenant"—a translation of the New Testament that had added to his father's well-earned reputation, and is even now in esteem—a work of at least as great merit as the translation by our own Charles Thomson, the "perpetual secretary" of the Continental Congress, and "the man of truth."

The early education of Granville John, and of his brothers, Thomas and William, was conducted by their father: they never had gone to any school previous to their entering college. While at college—it may be mentioned in passing—Mr. Granville John Penn acted as one of the pages at the gorgeous coronation of George the Fourth—a position much sought for by young men of family. He was fond of relating that, on this great occasion, the young pages, unaccustomed to waiting on others, entirely forgot to bring in the hot dishes; the royal company was consequently obliged to be contented with the cold collation set on for show during the ceremony; after which the newly-fledged servitors had the satisfaction of consuming the turtle soups, the game, and other delicacies intended for royalty.

Granville John Penn passed most of his early years at his father's house in Hertford Street, Mayfair, with Lord and Lady Cremorne, or at Stoke Park, whither the family, at the period of the Weymouth season, regularly migrated during their uncle John's residence at the Portland castle.

It must be added that the subject of my too brief memoir, the late Granville John Penn, was rather suddenly stricken down, though there were evidences for some time of a breaking up of his constitution. He died March 29th, 1867, with a will unsigned in his hand—nobody being with him but his man-servant. By this omission of his signature, all his property descended to his brother Thomas, a gentleman in clerical orders, a man of most extensive reading and research, but subsequently declared, by a commission of lunacy, incapable of managing his estates, which were consequently in chancery, and since his death have gone to William Stuart, Esq., his nearest kin. The following notice of his death appeared in the *London Times*:

“ GRANVILLE JOHN PENN, Esq.

“ Granville John Penn, Esq., formerly of Stoke Park, Bucks, who died on the 29th ult., was the lineal representative of Sir William Penn, admiral of the fleet, temp. King Charles the Second, and of the admiral's only and illustrious son, William Penn, the Founder of Pennsylvania; and was the eldest son of Granville Penn, Esq., of Stoke

Park, by his wife Isabella, eldest daughter of General Gordon Forbes, colonel Twenty-ninth Foot; and grandson of his Excellency Governor Thomas Penn, and his wife, Lady Julianna Fermor, daughter of Thomas, first Earl of Pomfret. Mr. Granville John Penn was a deputy lieutenant and magistrate for Bucks, with which county he and his distinguished family had been so long associated. He died unmarried, and is succeeded by his only surviving brother, the Rev. Thomas Penn, M. A., of Christ Church, Oxon. Of the four sisters of Mr. Penn, just deceased, three died unmarried; and the eldest, Sophia, died the first wife of General Sir William Gomm, G. C. B. Sir William married a second time, and still survives, the beloved and favorite commander of the well-known and celebrated Coldstream Guards. At the age of eighty-nine he is a hale old gentleman, fond of society, attending all the court ceremonies and concerts, entertaining royalty at his own table, and taking his turn at the grouse during the shooting season. He was with Sir John Moore at Corinna so long ago as 1809, and commanded, before the last outbreak, the army of the interior of India, where he lived in great state. His retinue was accompanied by a large force of elephants, and with the train of an Eastern satrap he made an annual tour of inspection. Mr. G. J. Penn had repeated invitations to join him in these excursions, and to bring with him, as a companion, either an Englishman or an American; but these opportunities for a high ride on a howdah were reluctantly declined. Returning from India, he purchased the late John Penn's great house in London, where he resides. Sir William possesses some interests in Pennsylvania, which he acquired, however, by purchase. He is childless.

“The Penns have left their memory lastingly connected with their former seat, Stoke Park, and its neighborhood. Stoke Park, since their time the residence of Lord Taunton, and now in the possession of Mr. Coleman, has close to it the time-honored and beautiful churchyard of Gray's Elegy, where Gray himself reposes, with little as yet to notify the fact, and where his grave might be passed unheeded but for the magnificent cenotaph erected not far from the churchyard to the poet's memory by the worthy John Penn, governor of Portland in the County of Dorset, and last hereditary governor of Pennsylvania, grandson of the founder, William Penn, and uncle of the Mr. Penn just deceased. To the poet the Penns thus did honor, whilst, pursuant to the stringency of Quaker custom, their own great William Penn lies in an unmarked, humble grave in the Quakers' burial-ground of Jordans, a few miles from Stoke. Yet, as stated, the whole district is replete with recollections of the Penns, few visitors

failing to see Jordans, and to associate the Penn name with Stoke Park and village, and the monument of Gray."

Mr. Penn's remains were solemnly deposited in the family vault in the church situated on glebe land in Stoke Park—"Gray's Church"—to which the Penns had long been the most liberal patrons, a fine organ having been one of Granville John's last munificent gifts. As lord of the manor, the family pew occupied the entire basement beneath the steeple, which pew, unlike anything we see in America, was a large room, with a fireplace in it, comfortable chairs and ottomans, and a curtain drawn at pleasure to conceal the inmates. The great tomb or vault of the Penns is situated about the centre of the church, and to gain access to it numerous pews have to be removed.

I have proposed to trace the descendants of William Penn to the present generation, and there are several reasons why I should do so. In a transaction so large as the settlement of this Commonwealth, where proprietary interests and reservations of interests were frequent, there is no saying when the acquired rights may cease. As instances of those rights, two illustrations will suffice: Thomas Penn, son of the Founder, owned the site on which Easton, Pennsylvania, is built, and gave to the new town two squares of ground to erect thereon a court-house and a prison. In the deed it was stipulated that *a red rose* was to be paid at Christmas to the head of the family for ever, thus reserving a consideration. In course of time, the city fathers of Easton wished to remove their prison and court-house, and employ the ground as public squares. They could not divert the gift from its original purposes without consent of the heir of the Founder: he happened to be with us, say, in 1852. Application was made to allow the change, and a liberal cheque, "to save trouble," as the clerk expressed it, was sent, and I believe accepted, for granting the use of the ground to a new purpose.

Another instance may be mentioned. In all the manors—and they were quite numerous—reservation was made of all the minerals. About five years ago a zinc company was formed to work certain mineral lands in Sinking Valley, Tyrone County.

On examining their deeds it was found that the minerals were reserved, and some eight dollars an acre had to be paid to the agent of the Penns to extinguish the royalty.

It will be remembered that Admiral Penn declined one of the highest titles in the gift of the Crown because his son, having turned Quaker, would never wear it. He did not foresee that his descendants would return to the communion of the Church of England.

The Founder of Pennsylvania married, as already stated, first, Gulielma Maria Springett, daughter of Sir William Springett, formerly of Darling in Sussex, who was killed in the civil wars at the siege of Barnber, and, secondly, Hannah, the daughter of Thomas Callowhill; and it is worthy of note how many titles are still in possession of his present or late descendants.

Thomas, son of the Founder, married, at the age of fifty, Lady Julianna Fermor, daughter of the Earl of Pomfret and Lempster. Her father's titles became extinct in 1867 by the decease of the Earl of Pomfret, who died unmarried at his London residence in St. James' Place, in his forty-third year. Mr. G. J. Penn had been his guardian, as well as of his younger brother, also now deceased. Lord Pomfret received his degrees in 1845, and soon after took his seat in the House of Lords. His appearance was distinguished: tall and handsome, in his Oxford dress he looked the young nobleman. I find the following in the *London Times*: as it is brief and to our purpose, enumerating sundry near relatives, etc., it is here inserted:

“WILLS AND BEQUESTS.—Probate of the will of the Right Hon. George William Richard Fermor, Earl of Pomfret, late of Easton Neston, Northamptonshire, was granted by Her Majesty's Court of Probate, on the 5th of August, to his lordship's brothers-in-law, Sir Thomas George Hesketh and Colonel Thomas Wedderburn Ogilvy, (Life Guards,) and his (the testator's) cousin, Sir George William Denys, of Draycott Hall, Yorkshire, the executors. The personality was sworn under twenty thousand pounds. His lordship's will bears date the 13th of February, 1867, and he died on the 8th of June, in St. James' Place, at the age of forty-three, a bachelor. The title becomes extinct. He has appointed and devised all his estates in Cumberland, subject to conditions of indenture of 1851 and

otherwise, to his cousin, Sir George William Denys: and devises all his other freehold estates, over which he had a power of disposal, to such uses as are contained in the settlement, and to be held in like manner; and leaves all his pictures, furniture, and plate to be held with the settled estates in the County of Northampton. He bequeathes the residue of his personal property to his two sisters, Lady Anna Maria Arabella, wife of Sir Thomas G. Hasketh, M. P., of Rufford Hall, Leicestershire, and Lady Henrietta Louisa, wife of Colonel Thomas W. Ogilvy, in equal proportions."

Pomfret Castle and the principal estates are in Northamptonshire.

Lady Julianna is always mentioned in the family with the greatest respect and regard. An engraving of Sir Joshua Reynolds's portrait of herself, surrounded by her young family, is a fine work of art and very rare.

While thus dwelling on the Penn family, it is interesting to remember that not only is the name of the Founder affixed to many places in our State, as well as elsewhere, but the names of his relations, such as Callowhill and Letitia, also occur as household words, and are to be found on our street corners. In Easton, streets are still called Julianna, Fermor, and Pomfret. Lancaster boasts of a Julianna Library, which, I am afraid, is composed mostly of musty volumes.

William Penn's granddaughter, Margaret, married Thomas Freame: their daughter, Philadelphia Hannah, born in Philadelphia, married Viscount Cremorne, of Dawson Grove, Ireland, and thus became Lady Cremorne. They owned and resided on a beautiful spot in London, on the Thames, which has been sold, and is known as Cremorne Gardens, a place long of fashionable resort. The title is still in existence, and the present head of the family has lately been created Earl Dartrey, his eldest son bearing the title of Lord Cremorne. Earl Dartrey is a nobleman of large income, and is an Irish peer: the family name is Dawson. He is in high favor, and at this time one of the lords of the court, and is constantly attendant upon the Queen.

There was a lovely portrait of Philadelphia Hannah Penn, Lady Cremorne, in the great north room of Stoke, painted by Sir Joshua; and one of the last acts of the late Mr. Penn was

the presentation of this portrait, and that of her husband, to Earl Dartrey. Lady Cremorne died so lately as 1826, at the age of eighty-six. Some of the Cremorne furniture and china and plate was at Pennsylvania Castle in 1865.

William Penn's son, Thomas, had a daughter, Sophia Margaret, who married, May 3, 1796, Archbishop Stuart of Armagh, a lineal descendant of the royal family of Stuart, and Lord Primate of all Ireland. Very singularly, the archbishop, when ill with the gout and in great suffering, called for his opiate, prescribed to allay pain, when Mrs. Stuart, in her anxiety, administered the embrocation, which, being a poison, caused his death. It is said that on discovering her fatal mistake, she rushed into the street in her night-dress, and her hair turned white with the horror of her incautious act: certain it is that she never recovered her equanimity.

The Most Rev. Dr. Stuart died in 1822. His remains were deposited in the family vault at Sutton, where, on one of the walls of the old church, is a marble tablet, bearing the following interesting inscription :

"In the same vault with  
The Honorable William Stuart, D. D.,  
Primate of all Ireland,  
Are deposited the remains of his Widow,  
The Honorable Sophia Margaret,  
The last surviving granddaughter of  
William Penn,  
The celebrated Founder of Pennsylvania.  
Born 25th of December, 1764.  
Died 29th of April, 1847.  
Also Louisa, their youngest daughter,  
Who departed this life 20th of December, 1823,  
Aged 22 years."

Their eldest son, William, married Henrietta, daughter of Admiral Sir C. Pole, who, by the decease of his near relatives, is now the head of the house of Penn.

Their daughter, Mary Julianna, married Thomas, Viscount Northland, Earl Ranfurly, the eldest son retaining the title of Northland. The title of Ranfurly is now held by an infant, the fourth earl. The family name is Knox. The Hon. Stuart Knox,  
VOL. I.—C

son of a former earl, now represents what is called a pocket borough, Dungannon, in Parliament.

I find the following brief notice in the *London Illustrated News*, of July, 1866. It serves to continue our story, and is therefore inserted entire :

“THE COUNTESS DOWAGER OF RANFURLY.

“The Right Hon. Mary Julianna, Countess Dowager of Ranfurly, who died on July 10, 1866, at her town-house, 10 Gloucester Place, Portman Square, was the eldest daughter of the late Honorable and Most Rev. William Stuart, Lord Archbishop of Armagh, by his wife, Sophia Margaret Julianna, daughter of Thomas Penn, Esq., and his wife, Lady Julianna Penn, of Stoke Park, Stoke Pogis, Bucks, and was the granddaughter of King George the Third’s celebrated prime minister, John, third Earl of Bute, K. G., and was the sister of the present William Stuart, Esq., of Aldenham Abbey, Herts. Her ladyship was born April 3, 1797, and was married, February 8, 1815, to Thomas, second Earl of Ranfurly, who died April 26, 1840. By this union her ladyship had issue—Thomas, third Earl of Ranfurly, and two other sons, one of whom survives; and seven daughters, of whom six survive and four are married—viz., Lady Mary Stuart Page Read, of Sutton House, Suffolk; Lady Louisa Julianna Alexander, of Forkhill House, in the County of Armagh; Lady Julianna Caroline Walker; and Lady Adela Henrietta Goff, of Hale Park, Hants. The Lady Ranfurly just deceased was grandmother of Thomas Granville Henry Stuart, fourth and present Earl of Ranfurly.”

The now minor Earl of Ranfurly, Thomas Granville Henry Stuart, is said to inherit a large rent-roll from estates in the North of Ireland, which will accumulate during his minority.

William Stuart, Esq., a son of the Most Rev. William Stuart, and now the representative of the Penn family, is a gentleman of education and fortune. He lives in hospitable style, and has a noble library, in the centre of which, on a pedestal and gorgeous cushion, and covered with a glass urn reversed, is preserved the gold medal and long chain presented to Admiral Penn by Parliament. Its fellow, a like gift to Admiral Blake, was considered by the heirs of Blake intrinsically too valuable to retain, and was melted. Thus the Penn medal is unique.

Our own Pennsylvania family of descendants of the Founder, the Gaskills and Halls, etc., are also the heirs of the honor of the lineage. They are descended from William Penn's oldest son, William, who married Mary Jones, and died in France. They are our highly esteemed fellow-citizens of Pennsylvania, and possess the Irish estate.

William Penn's son, William, married Mary Jones, as above stated. Their son, William, married, first, Christiana Forbes; second, Ann Vaux. This third William's daughter by his first wife, Christiana Gulielma, married Peter Gaskill. Their children were Jane, Thomas Penn, Alexander Forbes, Peter Penn, and William Penn Gaskill. Peter Penn Gaskill married Elizabeth Edwards, of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, and left numerous issue, viz.: William Penn; Thomas Penn, married to Mary McGlenachen; Eliza Penn; Alexander Forbes; Peter Penn, married to Louisa Heath; Jane Penn; Isaac Penn; Christiana Gulielma, married to William Hall.

From Peter Penn Gaskill and Louisa Heath descended Elizabeth Penn; Louisa, married to William Gerald Fitzgerald; Mary Gulielma Penn, Gulielma Penn, Hetty Penn, Mary Penn, William Penn, Jane Penn, Emily Penn, and Peter Penn.

Christiana Gulielma Gaskill, who married William Hall, left descendants, viz.: William Hall and Peter Hall.

There are other descendants of the Founder whom this imperfect sketch should note. To save confusion, I have traced the family of Thomas first. Richard, his brother, (son of the Founder,) was joint proprietor with Thomas. He married Hannah Lardner, daughter of Richard Lardner, M. D. Lynford Lardner, brother to Hannah (Lardner) Penn, came to this country, and was much esteemed and trusted by the proprietaries: he was appointed receiver-general and keeper of the great seal. He was a gentleman in all the senses of that comprehensive word, and has left a family still high in the esteem of their fellow-citizens. They possess some valuable portraits of the Penns, sent them, with every token of esteem and regard, by Richard Penn. May we hope that these, now in the family of Richard Penn Lardner, Esq., will be carefully preserved? The children of Richard Penn by Hannah Lardner were John Penn,

governor of Pennsylvania from 1763 to the Revolution, who married Anne Allen, and died in Pennsylvania, but was buried in England, who also built Lansdowne, on the Schuylkill; Richard Penn, who married Mary Masters, and visited us in 1808; and Hannah, who married James Clayton.

Richard Penn and Mary Masters had issue—William, Richard, Hannah and Mary: the latter married Samuel Paynter. William visited Pennsylvania with his father in 1808, and remained here some years. His character was not an estimable one: he married here disreputably, and dying not long after, he left his widow but ill provided for: she went to Paris, where she was seen not many years since, still carrying the external marks of beauty.

Richard and Hannah never married, and survived to within a few years. They settled at Richmond Hill, on the Thames, and, finding their incomes insufficient for their style of life, Hannah came to Philadelphia, and sold their properties in this city at their then low values, and with the proceeds purchased a joint annuity. Richard, who was a genial, kind-hearted man, and the author of a little treatise on angling, devised his remaining proprietary interests to his intimate friend Sir Peter Smith, who now comes in for a share of the dilapidated fortune which, by the exercise of reasonable prudence and management, might have made its possessor one of the richest men of this rich age.

The last-named Richard undertook, at one time, to examine the papers of William Penn, to which no biographer of our Founder has yet had full access—a fact to be deeply deplored. For his purpose, a room at Stoke was prepared, and the librarian summoned, when huge trunks and drawers were placed at his disposal. The task proved too onerous, and was soon given up in despair. The next destination of these documents was a fireproof room of the Pantechnicon, in London, where they remained till 1864, together with the family and other pictures, plate, and reserved valuables. In that year a portion of the letters and papers was transported to Pennsylvania Castle. There I saw some of them, particularly English letters to Penn from well-known celebrities; but nothing had been opened

relating to Pennsylvania. It is for many reasons to be hoped the family will show mercy to these long locked-up documents, and give them to the world under suitable auspices.

The little less than malicious charges of Lord Macaulay against William Penn, lately repeated (and distorted) by Victor Hugo, have been ably and successfully refuted; but it is well to say here that the late Granville John Penn found the most ample proofs of their falsity. He had collated from a number of family letters and papers sufficient to convince the world that the would-be historian's assertions were untrue accusations. Mr. Penn, unfortunately, did not live to make them public.

For any further information regarding the family of Penn, I refer to a sheet entitled "William Penn, Proprietary of Pennsylvania, his Ancestors and Descendants. 1852. By THOMAS GILPIN"—a painstaking and accurate genealogist and gentleman—from which may be gleaned many names and marriages here omitted.

The fragmentary particulars I have prepared will have exhibited, by inference, the career of some of the more prominent members of the family, who, though most respectably and honorably employed, abandoned to agents one of the finest inheritances on earth—a province situated on the isothermal line most conducive to the healthy growth and happiness of man; where fogs do not hide the light of heaven, nor hurricanes destroy whole cities at one fell blast; where the climate is not so cold in winter as to destroy the animals on which man depends for labor and food, as is sometimes the case farther northward, nor insupportably warm in the summer solstice, as in the country and islands south of us; a province where grow the best fruits, cereals, and grass, and vegetables, in the utmost perfection and luxuriance; where iron and coal are in such abundance that no man has yet dared to calculate the date of their exhaustion; where perfect freedom as regards religious tenets—thanks to the Founder—exists, and where we might all be as happy as it is possible to be on this planet—if we could only get rid of the politicians. In short, we have the best climate in the world, producing, by the simple labors of the freeman, and—thanks to our own inventions, with lightened toil—nearly all

needed luxuries. All this fair land and its abundance — of which even the tenths reserved at the Revolution were a princely estate — were left for the ease and honors of the Old World — it is not mere hyperbole to say *abandoned* for less noble objects of ambition. Agents and sub-agents, at a heavy cost, were employed; proprietary governors were salaried and supported; the moneys received were almost always spent in advance; and a commission and interest were charged by London bankers, who kept an open account with the heirs as long as there was anything to authorize it. It sometimes seems to me that every stone composing the walls of Pennsylvania Castle cost a city lot; that every pane of glass in Stoke mansion alienated a ground rent; while every grand entertainment in the London house may safely be said to have taken a farm.

An American was asked, in London, not many years ago, by a person in good society, and who ought to have known better, if Philadelphia was near Pennsylvania. It is true that many of our transatlantic cousins know little of us; for this ignorance, however, we can forgive them, for we know little of many points, geographical and other, relating to them; but we could not forgive ourselves, and posterity would not forgive us, if we, who have been their contemporaries, allowed the inheritors of our Founder's name to be left without trace or memento. As a matter of taste and feeling we should make the record: if it is a duty, it is surely a matter of interest historically, to know the fate of the descendants of a great and good man. Such is the pleasing task of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania when it commemorates the good deeds of Penn — deeds which have resulted in such great and permanent good. He sowed in sorrow — we are reaping the ripened fruit. *We* should rejoice to keep bright the chain, and record, as time passes rapidly away, the story of his posterity.

The exact story of William Penn's connection with his father the admiral, has been sometimes a little distorted. It is well, therefore, to copy here what his grandson says, in his "Life of Sir William Penn." It is evidently intended to be, and probably is, entirely correct:

“ His father’s health, which had been declining rapidly throughout the summer, was now on the point of failing him altogether. His disappointment, and the various conflicting feelings put in action by his son’s imprisonment and persecution, could not but tend to hasten its decay. Though he was deeply grieved at the course which his son had chosen to pursue, he was sensible of his excellence, admired his qualities, and was indignant at his persecutors. In the few days that he survived after his son’s liberation he had the comfort of receiving, both from the King and Duke of York, the most gracious and kind assurances of their regard, and their promise of continuing the same to his son ; a promise, which both these princes religiously observed. At length, on the 16th of the same month of September, he sunk under his infirmities ; and expired, worn out by his public services, at the age of forty-nine years and five months.” — *Life of Sir William Penn*, by GRANVILLE PENN.

“ It had been the King’s intention to raise Sir William Penn to a higher honor, by the title of the borough which he represented in Parliament ; but, his son having embraced the persuasion of the Society of Quakers, and having, in 1668, in his work entitled, ‘ No Cross, no Crown,’ published an express and vehement disclaimer of all titles of honor, through the religious principles of his new persuasion, that stream of royal favor was stemmed. In that work he largely assigns ‘ the reasons why he, and the people with whom he walks in religion, decline giving gaudy titles, and refuse the present use of these customs ; and cannot esteem titles such as these, most excellent, most sacred, your grace, your lordship, etc., being prohibited by God, his Son, and servants in days past.’ To this point he alludes, in a letter written some years after, (the 5th of the 10th month, 1682), from the new town of Chester, in his infant province of Pennsylvania : ‘ It is more than a *worldly title or patent* that hath clothed me in this place : nor am I sitting down in a *greatness that I have denied*. Had I sought greatness, I had stayed at home ; where the difference between what I am here, and was offered and could have had there, is as wide as the places are.’ ” — *Ibid.*

NOTE. — Works, Life, fol., vol. 1, p. 124 ; Svo., vol. 1., p. 86 ; Clarkson’s *Life of William Penn*, vol. 1, pp. 351—352. Mr. Clarkson, not being aware of the allusion in the first sentence, has omitted it in his extract from this letter. During the years 1768—70, when Viscount Weymouth was secretary of state for the plantations, the late Mr. Thomas Penn, last surviving son of the Quaker, (my father,) often observed in his family, that, in transacting the business of his province with that noble lord, he could rarely avoid the reflection that, if his father had not been a Quaker, he should

have borne the title then borne by the noble secretary. It is certain that the title of Weymouth did not issue from the Crown until after the execution of the grant of the province of Pennsylvania, as its equivalent, in 1680; which province was erected by its charter, into a seignory, and the grant made to rest on the same ground on which the title would have stood; viz.: “*The merits of Sir William Penn in divers services, etc.*”—*Life of Sir William Penn*, by GRANVILLE PENN.

---

#### EXTRACT FROM SIR WILLIAM PENN'S WILL.

“I do also will and devise unto my eldest son, William Penn, my *gold chain and medal*, with the rest and residue of all my plate, household stuff, etc., not herein before devised, etc. And I do hereby constitute and declare, nominate, and appoint my said son William sole executor of this my last will and testament,” etc.

NOTE.—His gold chain and medal remain with his family. An engraving of the medal is given in Virtue's Collection of the Works of Simon, the eminent artist who executed it, facing page 27. A correct engraving of the same is also published, as a frontispiece, in one of the volumes of Charnock's *Biographia Navalis*.—*Life of Sir William Penn*.

---

Here lieth the body of  
HONOURABLE JOHN PENN, Esq.,  
One of the late Proprietaries of  
Pennsylvania.  
Who died February 9th, A. D. 1795,  
Aged 67 years.

[The above inscription is upon a slab in the aisle in front of the chancel, 19 feet from the south wall, Christ Church, Philadelphia.]

---

The house occupied by General Washington, on Market below Sixth Street, Philadelphia, was the property of William Masters, and the inheritance of Mrs. Penn and Mrs. Camac, and they lived there for some time. It was afterwards sold to Robert Morris, and rented for the President.

Ann Allen, who married Richard Penn, (sup. xxxvi.,) was the daughter of Chief-Justice Allen, and granddaughter of Andrew Hamilton. Chief-Justice Allen bought the house on the west side of Third, between Willing's Alley and Spruce Street, which had been built by Colonel Byrd, of Westover, Va. The house was afterwards the property and residence of Chief-Justice Chew.











